THE
# CATHOLIC RADICAL

*"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed."* Peter Maurin

**October/November 2024** ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

# Women Killed in Israeli Attack on Holy Family Parish in Gaza

**by Vatican News**

*Editor's Note: Although this story ran on December 23, 2023, it reminds us of the September 6 murder of American peace activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi. The number of doctors, nurses, humanitarian aid workers, United Nations staff members, reporters, women, and children killed by Israel is now so high that it can no longer be denied as a deliberate Israeli military tactic.*

*Nahida and Samar Khalil Anton*

Israelis have opened fire on Gaza's Christians. Following heavy bombardment overnight of the area around Holy Family Latin parish in Gaza City, dozens are reported dead, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa, and reports continue to arrive that shooting by Israeli snipers continues during these hours.

A statement released by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem confirmed that an Israeli sniper murdered two Christian women inside the Holy Family Parish where the majority of Christian families have taken refuge since the start of the war.

The victims are 70-year-old Nahida Khalil Anton and her 50-year-old daughter Samar who were shot and killed as they walked to the Sister's Convent. "One was killed as she tried to carry the other to safety," the statement said.

Seven more people were reportedly also shot and wounded as they tried to protect those inside the church compound. The Patriarchate's statement noted, "No warning was given, no notification was provided. They were shot in cold blood inside the premises of the Parish, where

**(Continued on Page 2)**

# A Case for Genealogy

**by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy**

Delving into one's family tree is a tough sell. Unless you are a narcissistic fanatic about your family, researching birth, marriage, and death dates for relatives you never met ranks right up there with stamp collecting (something I did for years) and watching paint dry. Although the possibility exists that you will discover that you are descended from someone famous, just remember that, with each generation back, the number of other people related to Mr. or Ms. Spectacular goes up geometrically. The revelation that you are related to Charlemagne diminishes when you realize that millions of others are as well.

Outside of doing my best to remember the names of my aunts and uncles, siblings, first cousins, in-laws, and an ever-expanding crowd of nieces, nephews and grandchildren, why would I want to know my great-great-grandfather was a plumber named Bob from Poughkeepsie? Simultaneously, learning that almost half of humanity suffers misfortune, divorce, the death of one or more children, or an unexpected or extremely painful death are bummers best left unknown.

But thirty-four years ago, distant relatives on my mother's side invited us to a family reunion, and my mother thought a family tree would be a nice thing to bring. To please her, I contacted our older relatives and gathered what information I could. Almost immediately, I learned a few things I didn't already know:

- When he was 14, my Swedish great

**(Continued on Page 4)**

# Killed in Gaza

(Continued from Page 1)

there are no belligerents."

The statement also revealed that a rocket fired from an Israeli Defense Forces tank during the morning targeted and struck the Convent of the Sisters of Mother Teresa, destroying the building's generator — its only source of electricity — while a massive fire damaged the house.

"The Convent is home to over 54 disabled persons and is part of the church compound, which was signalled as a place of worship since the beginning of the war," it said.

The building was subsequently targeted by two more rockets rendering the home inhabitable: "The 54 disabled persons are currently displaced and without access to the respirators that some of them need to survive."

Three other people were also wounded inside the church compound during the night attacks, while solar panels and water tanks, which are indispensable for the survival of the community, were destroyed.

The ongoing attack was reportedly justified by Israelis who claimed the presence of a rocket launcher in the parish. Despite the Patriarchate's intervention, the operation has not been halted. Israeli soldiers reportedly fired towards the parish compound and the civilians sheltering in the building.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem concluded expressing closeness and condolences to the families "affected by this senseless tragedy."

It expresses a lack of comprehension for "how such an attack could be carried out, even more so as the whole Church prepares for Christmas." Ω

# Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi

Twenty-six-year-old Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, a Turkish-born American human rights activist and peer mentor, was a volunteer for the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) and an activist against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. On September 6, 2024, she was shot in the head and killed by an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) sniper during a protest against illegal Israeli settlements in Beita, Nablus, in the West Bank.

Eygi is the third ISM member to be killed by the IDF, with Rachel Corrie killed in 2003 and Tom Hurndall killed in 2004.

Eygi was born in Turkey. Her family moved to the US when she an infant. Eygi was raised in Seattle and graduated from the University of Washington with a major in psychology and a minor in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures.

Eygi participated in the Faz'a movement, an organization which fights for the rights of Palestinian farmers who are persecuted by the Israeli military and attacked by settlers.

Eygi took part in a weekly protest in Beita, Nablus. Jonathan Pollak, an Israeli activist who also participated in the protest, claimed the shooting happened soon after dozens of Palestinians and foreign activists gathered for a communal prayer on a hillside near Beita, which overlooks the illegal Israeli settlement of Evyatar. Ω

*Rachel Corrie, a 24-year-old American peace activist, joined an ISM protest against the demolition of a Palestinian home. She was killed when an Israeli soldier drove a bulldozer over her.*

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Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089 Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

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# Nuclear Weapons Raise the Risks

**by Mark Colville**

*Editor's Note: A founding member of New Haven, Connecticut's Amistad Catholic Worker, Mark Colville was one of three Catholic Workers who traveled to the West Bank in September. He was also a member of the Kings Bay Plowshares protest against the Trident submarine.*

Recent reports that the US military has deployed two Electric Boat-built [in Groton, Connecticut by General Dynamics Corporation] nuclear-armed submarines to the Middle East with the mission to "defend Israel," should strike not only fear, but outrage and deep regret, both in the local community that produces these killing machines and the taxpayers who have funded their production.

I make this assertion as a New Haven resident just returning from a multi-faith Just Peace delegation to the region, organized by Rabbis For Ceasefire and Christians For Ceasefire, and guided by Sabeel, a Palestinian Christian theological center based in Jerusalem. In addition to amplifying the near-universal global calls for an immediate ceasefire, we also provided protective international accompaniment in Palestinian enclaves throughout the West Bank and at the Gaza border, bearing witness to the atrocities being inflicted there daily, relentlessly, on these defenseless people. Later we engaged in public prayer and protest at the Gaza border and the US embassy in Jerusalem.

Contrary to mainstream censorship and media spin, or the duplicity and silence of our own subservient government officials, the reality on the ground is indisputable: Israel has been overtaken by ultra-extremists with a declared ideological agenda of ethnic cleansing, mass expulsion, unlawful detention without charge, illegal land-grabs, and military support of violent vigilante attacks against innocent people. Their goal is to use the specter of Hamas as a way to completely empty Palestinian land of all Palestinians. Since October 7th. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his cabinet ministers have been arming settlers and encouraging them to terrorize Palestinian villages in order to make way for illegal settler expansion. Israel's prison system has become a network of torture camps, according to B'tselem, the leading Israeli human rights organization. Home demolitions have been aggressively ramped up in neighborhoods all over East Jerusalem. We even saw firsthand, throughout the occupied territories, a common practice apparently taken straight out of Nazi Germany: the spray-painting of the Star of David at locations where Palestinians are to be targeted for violent invasion and forced expulsion from their homes and farms.

Indeed the most ominous, and to date the most accurate assessment I heard during this nine-day journey, came from fellow-participant Maung Zarni, a Burmese Buddhist and renowned international genocide scholar whose work has been widely reviewed by UN officials: "Israel has built a vast genocidal ecosystem in occupied Palestine."

In the aftermath of World War II, as the full picture of Germany's lawlessness and atrocities under Hitler became fully exposed, we were all assured that the building and possession of nuclear armaments — by our side only — was a necessary evil. "We had to get the bomb, and now we must keep it," they tell us, so that the entire world won't fall victim to a madman — a dictator unrestrained either by law, the will of the people, or respect for basic human rights. It was, and, for some, remains a persuasive argument on its surface.

It's even logical to assume that this is the precise reasoning with which the engineers at Electric Boat continue to numb their consciences, as they come to work each day. But on the heels of this heartrending, terrifying encounter with the sick society that we've all enabled Israel to become, I can only beg those engineers and their colleagues to look at the new reality outside our doors, right now. What Israel is showing us is simply that, when it comes to the future prospects of anything resembling conflict resolution, de-escalation of tensions and international cooperation, the Bomb has already exploded.

Nuclear weapons have effectively eviscerated the rule of law, entrenching as the norm a mafioso-style violence and thuggery in inter-governmental relations, even as they mock the very pretext of diplomacy. The message sent by the Biden/Harris regime in deploying Trident nuclear subs to the Middle East has zero to do with defending anyone's "right to exist." It is nothing but a now-routine, bald-faced claim to impunity, with as little regard for any kind of "rules-based order" as for the millions of lives they are playing with so arrogantly.

The only future that we can pass on to our children, if we don't stop building nuclear weapons, is one in which genocide is accepted as the the new normal. All Electric Boat employees ought to take this to heart, and then stop bringing their gifts and talents every day to the cultivation of criminality and death. Ω

# Genealogy

**(Continued from Page 1)**

grandfather, John August Carlson, got run over by a Boston trolley and had a leg amputated. Unfazed, he carved himself a wooden leg and never gave it a second

*Barbara Leighton Duffy (1931-1990); Florence Alice Duncklee Leighton (1909-1977); Kate Crystal Weeks Duncklee (1888-1974); Susan Adelaide Quincy Weeks (1856-1948), photo taken in 1935*

thought, except when he was at the beach where he took off the prosthesis waving it at children to scare them. Apparently, the wooden leg didn't diminish his ability as an excellent dancer either.

• On a cold winter night, my Irish great-grandfather, Patrick John Duffy, while working outside Liverpool, England during the Potato Famine, sat in a pub with a friend and overheard several Englishmen making fun of them for speaking Irish. At six feet four inches tall, Pat didn't stand for any guff. He got up in silence, walked over to the loudest Englishman, lifted him off his feet, and sat him on a hot pot-belly stove. A fight ensued. Before the bobbies could arrest them, Pat and his friend fled to the harbor and hid in a ship which, to their surprise, sailed for Boston. The captain, a man named Hathaway, took pity on them and didn't turn my ancestor and his friend in as stowaways. Pat met a lass in Boston from a village, near his own in County Mayo, Ireland, and they married.

• My grandmother, a registered nurse, described the horror of the Spanish Flu Pandemic which took the lives of 675,000 Americans. Boston required residents to hang a white handkerchief outside their front door if someone inside was infected. My grandmother remembers a Sunday morning when she stepped outside and saw hundreds, if not thousands, of the white warning signs fluttering in the breeze in front of brownstone apartment houses.

Sadly, visits to local cemeteries and personal conversations could only take me back three generations. What I compiled amounted to more of a family bush than tree.

To branch out farther, so to speak, I wrote hand-written letters to church pastors and town clerks to get baptismal, marriage, birth, and death certificates. These documents include the names of unknown relatives, birthdates, and addresses, information that allowed me to repeat the process until the trail grew cold. Sometimes, I had to pay a dollar. Sometimes, I reached a dead end, like when I discovered that a town hall in New Hampshire with all its paper records had been destroyed in a fire. But, sometimes, I got all kinds of information, especially from town clerks in Maine, Ireland, and Sweden. I guess my handwriting, never known for its maturity, gave people the impression I was a teenager, a happenstance that might have invoked pity and considerable cooperation.

Some folks relished digging into the records as if the task represented fascinating detective work, more interesting than the daily grind. Among other things, I learned that my Swedish great grandmother, Alice Emma Axelina Carlson, (I love the way they had so many names back then), was the only child of an unmarried mother.

I also took a trip to a government library to look up entries in the US Census. This proved good and bad. I picked up some names and ages of relatives on my mother's side. On seeing them, she boasted, "You won't find a single Catholic," but I hit a brick wall with my Irish great grandfather. Pat replied to every census until his death in 1937. Unfortunately, either due to bad record-taking or impish behavior on Pat's part, his age listings place his birth in five different years. His grave stone, to make matters worse, gives another birthdate altogether. Searching for the ancestors of an Irishman named Patrick Duffy without a reliable birth year is like looking for random John Smiths.

Nonetheless, by the time of the family reunion, I had traced my mother's side back seven generations to the late 1600s. Apparently, some of my relatives fought in the American Revolution on both sides. A branch that spent sixty years living in Halifax, instead of their earlier residence in Maine, must have been loyalist. A few prominent names began to pop up. Captain Nathan Freeman and Joseph Quincy were likely suspects as descendents of early colonists. Unfortunately, my primitive investigation techniques could go no farther, so I set the project aside.

Twenty years later, while cleaning out a closet, I found a box stuffed with documents and photos from my earlier research. On a hunch, I took the box downstairs and set it beside my computer. I wondered if the internet, an innovation only recently discovered by me at that time, might save a bundle on stamps and speed up the collection of information. A short foray proved this was correct, but a bit tricky. There were websites which, for a hefty fee, would send you a complete family tree all the way back to the tenth

*Edmund Quincy III (1681-1738) Harvard graduate and owner of enslaved people: Joseph and Tabitha; their children Cippio, Titus, and Biulhan; Simon; Dutchess and Peter. Edmund presided at their wedding.*

century, but I suspected these outfits had files of ready-made genealogies with dubious authenticity and accuracy. On the other hand, F*ind a Grave* and *Ancestry. Com* provided basic information for free, letting me inch my own way back a few more generations to establish that I am

*Andrew Willet (1562-1621)- prolific writer whose most notable work,* Synopsis Papismi. *charged fifteen hundred errors and heresies against the church of Rome.*

descended from William Brewster, one of a only three Pilgrims who did not get sick during the first winter after they landed in Plymouth. The trouble with these sites was they often disagreed on dates and the spelling of names. You couldn't be 100% certain that you were on track.

But this year, after cleaning again (I do this not as often as I should), I took up the challenge once more and discovered that loads of information is now online for free: birth, death, marriage, and baptismal records, wills, letters, articles, and images of portraits, homes, and castles. In short order, I added more than fifty names to my tree, reaching reliably back to the early 1400s, where I learned that I am descended from England's King Edward IV and his mistress Elizabeth Wayte. The fact that he was one of those philandering monarchs who started out fit and ended up as obese as Henry VIII notwithstanding, I was impressed. I also learned that I had an ancestor who helped defeat the Scottish King James IV, and another who was wounded at the Boston Massacre.

*Captain Thomas Willet (1605-1674 )- negotiated the peaceful transfer of New Amsterdam to the British*

Tangentially, I am related to President John Adams, accused ax murderess Lizzie Borden, and director of *Star Wars* George Lucas.

More importantly, I now know details of many ancestors' lives: one who befriended and defended Indians; one who persecuted Quakers; one who championed religious tolerance; one who had slaves; and dozens who fought in the War of the Roses, French and Indian wars, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, and World Wars I and II. I also learned that one relative, a sea captain, was captured by the French, helped pilot his captors' ship during a storm, and thereby won his freedom, that another relative survived a plague which killed one of out of three people in England, and

*Dorothy Quincy Jackson (1709-1762)*

that yet another, in his will, left his heirs "240 beavers." Another ancestor, a Welsh lord who, to remain Catholic during the Protestant domination, hid a Marian priest in his castle. And a relative sixteen generations removed, falsely accused of treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London for five years until Henry VIII ordered his release, suffered a fatal heart attack upon hearing the good news. By choice or by chance, lives went one way or another.

The biggest weaknesses of my research lies in the dearth of information about women and enslaved people. I know how many children they had and how many of them died very young. I also know who died in childbirth and who had more than one husband, but would like to know so much more.

Genealogy can help us reflect on the quality of our own lives and the mysteries of the web of lives without which we would not exist.

A six-generations-back cousin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the father of the US Supreme Court Justice of the same name, wondered about his grandmother Dorothy Quincy Jackson, whose portrait, painted when she was 14, hung in his Boston home. Holmes wrote a poem entitled "Dorothy Q" in which he ponders:

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring—
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered NO,...
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Genealogy teaches us that we are not alone. Our decisions impact our world and our descendants. Heroes or cowards, sinner or saints. It's up to us what legacy we leave. Ω

# The Custom House

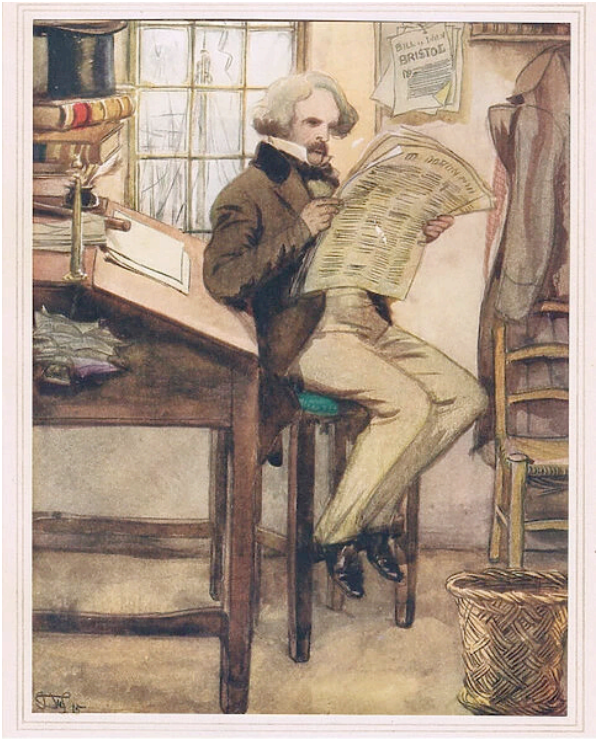
**by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

*Editor's Note: Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, never sought or accepted financial assistance from the government. One possible rationale for her choice exists in Nathaniel Hawthorne's introduction to* **The Scarlet Letter,** *a book he wrote only after he lost steady government work at Salem's Custom House.*

During the whole of my Custom-House experience, moonlight and sunshine, and the glow of firelight, were just alike in my regard; and neither of them was of one whit more avail than the twinkle of a tallow-candle. An entire class of susceptibilities, and a gift connected with them — of no great richness or value, but the best I had — was gone from me....

It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age, or to insist on creating the semblance of a world out of airy matter, when, at every moment, the impalpable beauty of my soap-bubble was broken by the rude contact of some actual circumstance.... These perceptions had come too late. At the Instant, I was only conscious that what would have been a pleasure once was now a hopeless toil. There was no occasion to make much moan about this state of affairs. I had ceased to be a writer of tolerably poor tales and essays, and had become a tolerably good Surveyor of the Customs. That was all. But, nevertheless, it is anything but agreeable to be haunted by a suspicion that one's intellect is dwindling away, or exhaling, without your consciousness, like ether out of a phial, so that, at every glance, you find a smaller and less volatile residuum. Of the fact there could be no doubt and, examining myself and others, I was led to conclusions, in reference to the effect of public office on the character, not very favourable to the mode of life in question.

In some other form, perhaps, I may hereafter develop these effects. Suffice it here to say that a Custom-House officer of long continuance can hardly be a very praiseworthy or respectable personage, for many reasons; one of them, the tenure by which he holds his situation, and another, the very nature of his business,



*Hawthorne in the Custom House*

which — though, I trust, an honest one — is of such a sort that he does not share in the united effort of mankind.

An effect — which I believe to be observable, more or less, in every individual who has occupied the position — is, that while he leans on the mighty arm of the Republic, his own proper strength, departs from him. He loses, in an extent proportioned to the weakness or force of his original nature, the capability of self-support. If he possesses an unusual share of native energy, or the enervating magic of place do not operate too long upon him, his forfeited powers may be redeemable. The ejected officer —fortunate in the unkindly shove that sends him forth betimes, to struggle amid a struggling world — may return to himself, and become all that he has ever been. But this seldom happens. He usually keeps his ground just long enough for his own ruin, and is then thrust out, with sinews all unstrung, to totter along the difficult footpath of life as he best may. Conscious of his own infirmity — that his tempered steel and elasticity are lost — he forever afterwards looks wistfully about him in quest of support external to himself. His pervading and continual hope — a hallucination, which, in the face of all discouragement, and making light of impossibilities, haunts him while he lives, and, I fancy, like the convulsive throes of the cholera, torments him for a brief space after death — is, that finally, and in no long time, by some happy coincidence of circumstances, he shall be restored to office. This faith, more than anything else, steals the pith and availability out of whatever enterprise he may dream of undertaking. Why should he toil and moil, and be at so much trouble to pick himself up out of the mud, when, in a little while hence, the strong arm of his Uncle will raise and support him? Why should he work for his living here, or go to dig gold in California, when he is so soon to be made happy, at monthly intervals, with a little pile of glittering coin out of his Uncle's pocket? It is sadly curious to observe how slight a taste of office suffices to infect a poor fellow with this singular disease. Uncle Sam's gold — meaning no disrespect to the worthy old gentleman —has, in this respect, a quality of enchantment like that of the devil's wages. Whoever touches it should look well to himself, or he may find the bargain to go hard against him, involving, if not his soul, yet many of its better attributes; its sturdy force, its courage and constancy, its truth, its self-reliance, and all that gives the emphasis to manly character.... Ω

# Letters

Dear Scott and Claire,
I read with great interest your two articles on your recent pilgrimage. I'm so glad to hear that it was satisfying and special in many ways and that you are home safely. The hospitality sounded wonderful!

I leave for my trip on October 7th and was hoping to see your slide show before I leave. Thank you for sharing.

**Debbie Pallotto-Fontaine**
**Mansfield, Connecticut**

*Editor's Note: Please pray for Debbie and all those peregrinos (pilgrims) who are hiking or plan to hike the Camino de Santiago.*

*The following letters are from peregrinos, now friends, whom Claire and Scott met on their pilgrimage to the resting place of the Apostle James in Santiago Cathedral.*

Hi Scott
I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed reading the articles written by Claire and yourself.

It is so easy to forget certain values and experiences upon returning to our homes after doing a Camino. Simple things and kind words give us just as much joy as expensive holidays and that's why we love Caminos and the beautiful people we meet along the way.

We wish you both well and thank you for sending the article.

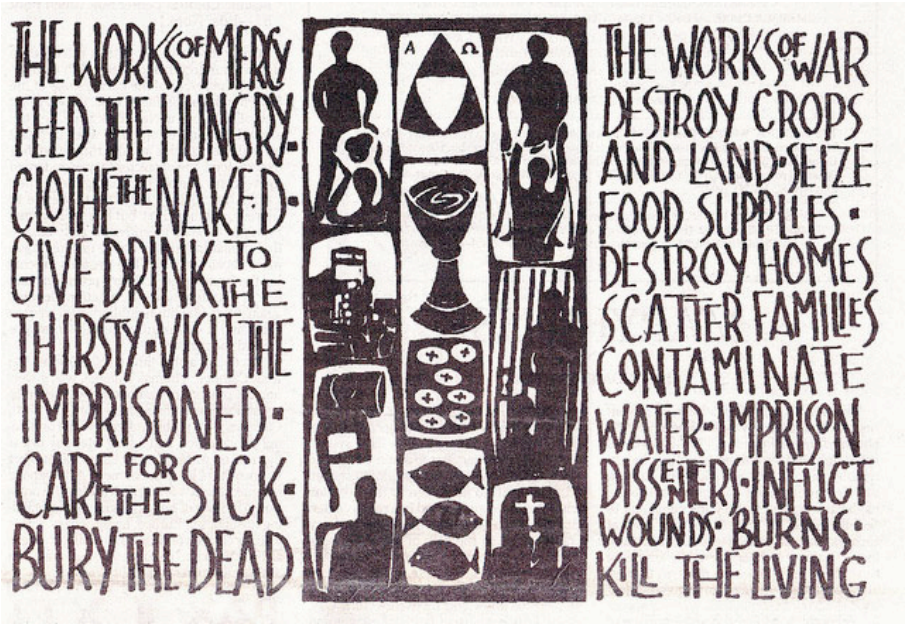
**Christine & Gerry McDermott**
**Willaston, Cheshire,**
**United Kingdom**

Dear Scott,
Wow! I just finished reading your and Claire's articles, and am just in awe at how beautifully and eloquently you both summarized your Camino experience. I returned home feeling overwhelmed still with all the emotions and thoughts and reflections, uncertain on what to do with all of it or how to properly honor it. I really admire how you both were able to document it so powerfully. Reading these articles really transported me back, and I'm already nostalgic for our time on the Way. Thank you so much for sharing the articles with me and sharing your stories with your community.

**Michelle Alexander**
**Santa Ana, California**

Sending love over to you back east! Just finished reading both articles and my heart is full! Thank you both for describing the Camino in your own words and space. Simply beautiful, and helped me process my own feelings and Spirit about the Camino. In gratitude and with Love,

**Anita Phillips**
**Saratoga Springs, New York**




*Rita Corbin*

## Catholic Worker Calendar

**Every Tuesday - Weekly Vigil for Peace:** Please join us in the longest-running peace vigil in Central Massachusetts. We provide signs. 3:30-4:30 PM, Lincoln Square, Worcester. For more information, call: 508 753-3588.

**October 8 & 22, November 4 & 18- Evening Prayer**: Please join us for short silent meditation followed by Evening Prayer with Taizé chant at 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7:00 PM, Please note that the prayer will be held on Tuesdays for these two months.

# Mason Street Musings

Finding goodness in children takes little effort. Their innocence and optimism can be amazing. Even though Claire and I raised four children, we re-learn the value of youngsters again and again in our six grandchildren. Their imaginative play and creative outlook often astounds.

Cynics might say, "Don't get duped into any broad conclusions on the goodness of humanity based on children because they are, by definition naive." Indeed, the daily news is jam-packed with shocking accounts of human depravity. But are people condemned to become less and less moral and less and less vivacious as they age?

As Catholic Workers we host unemployed, undocumented, and other homeless people, folks who have suffered from physical and sexual abuse, imprisonment, mental and other illness, discrimination, and war. With the current housing crisis and severe lack of emergency shelter, too many arrive after long periods sleeping on the street, in vehicles, or on friends' couches. Too many are separated from beloved children or partners. It would come as no surprise if all of them were depressed, irritable, and disinclined to be thoughtful of others.

And yet, more often than one might think, our guests display kindness, looking out for each other and us as well. An elderly South American woman, who was trafficked, gives us gifts of fresh fruit. Another guest gave me a brand new baseball hat and some collectible baseball cards. Many help out with cleaning and odd jobs around the house.

*Fiona Sliwoski*

And then, other people defy expectations. A fellow contacted us a couple of years ago to say that, although he disagrees with us politically, he likes to support diversity. Since then, he sends regular donations and calls to chat affably after each newsletter goes out.

An elderly widow, with very little income, gave us $1,000 after we suffered a house fire. Another woman, who was also not wealthy, gave us her car.

We witness selfless love more often than anyone might expect. I have even experienced kindness in jails and war zones. A Georgia man, who called himself B.J., looked out for me and all new inmates, despite waiting the results of his conviction for first-degree murder. An Israeli officer violated direct orders from his superiors to allow me and other members of a Catholic Worker Peace Team to enter a Palestinian refugee camp under Israeli attack. A reporter named Bruno, who wrote for the far-right-wing magazine, *Soldier of Fortune*, repeatedly helped me and other pacifists in Bosnia during that county's war. An impoverished Nicaraguan mother of six, living in a dirt-floored shack, served Claire, Carl Siciliano, and me eggs which were the only food she seemed to have.

Some people, in circumstances that defy belief, do not allow themselves to forget that they remain members of the human family and give generously to those in need without thought of return. They exemplify Gospel ideals even though many are not Christians.

Of course, like all of you, we meet a fair share of selfish people, but the generous outnumber the grumps ten to one. Certainly the cruelties of life and, ironically, even the abundance of wealth can transform marvelous children into dreadful adults, but, thanks be to God, we still meet individuals who have our grandchildren's contagious joy. May we all meet and be such people. Ω

**Scott**

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# Interfaith Solidarity Delegation

**by Beth Brockman**

*Editor's Note: In August, Beth Brockman, a Catholic Worker from Durham, North Carolina, joined Mark Colville, from the Catholic Worker in New Haven, Connecticut, in an interfaith fact-finding delegation to the Israeli-Occupied West Bank led by Sabeel, an ecumenical Christian Palestinian organization.*

I write to you with a heavy and full heart. Today [August 28] we woke up to the news that Israel had launched an attack in the West Bank, killing at least 9 Palestinians. This is significant news, according to our hosts at Sabeel, because there has not been an intensive ground attack since the Second Intifada. Nevertheless, we continued with the schedule lined up for the day, with the addition of what we had not been able to include the day before! Every day is full of heartbreaking moments of sorrow and joy. I am grateful to be able to bear witness and stand in solidarity with incredible Palestinians, whom, I can honestly say, are weary and struggling to stay alive in impossible conditions.

The entire interfaith delegation of 28, comprised of Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist siblings, has been together nowthree days, and we have been VERY busy, going from 7 in the morning till 7 or later at night. Our Sabeel hosts have been amazing with their leadership and hospitality. Rather than an account of everything we have done thus far (which is a lot), I'd like to instead share a story from today.

This afternoon, we visited the remains of the demolished home of Fakhri Abu Diab in Silwan, a neighborhood in Jerusalem with a population of around 40,000, where, according to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, a systematic campaign of demolishing Palestinian homes has been going on for more than fifteen years. Silwan has long been coveted by the Israeli government as a major tourist site, and 88 homes, housing some 5,000 Palestinian residents in the neighborhood's center, have been slated for demolition to make way for an archaeological park. We saw evidence of the beginning of this park on our visit to the neighborhood today. Additionally, Israeli settler organizations invest considerable sums of money and legal effort to replace Palestinian residents with Jewish ones. Hundreds of Palestinians face imminent eviction or demolition, while vast Israeli construction of housing projects (for Jews) and tourist facilities are planned.

*Fahkri Abu Diab*

To add insult to injury, Palestinians have to cover the cost of their homes being demolished, and when they do not pay them, they have to go to court and cover those fees as well! It's for this reason that they encourage Palestinians to demolish their own homes so they won't incur the cost of demolition.

In February, Fakhri's home was still standing and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's staff paid a visit and promised the family that the home wouldn't be demolished. A week later it was.

Fakhri and his family decided to remain and rebuild what they could. Two weeks ago they received notice that they are building without a permit, and the new building will likely be destroyed again. And yet, somehow, today Fahkri's family offered us incredible hospitality and served us a delicious lunch.

Fifteen years ago I joined a Catholic Worker Peace Team to Palestine, which included time in the West Bank. Mark Colville, who is here on this delegation, was also part of that Peace Team. Towards the end of our visit today, we both realized that we had visited Fakhri IN HIS HOME on that previous trip!

We recalled how he had told us as we sat in his simple, intact living room 15 years ago about his children stuffing their backpacks with their toys before going to school, fearing that they would lose them if they came home to find that their house has been demolished. And now it has been. Those children are grown now, some at university, and some have had children of their own. And with no family home to go back to. It's beyond devastating. Yet, Fakhri is still leading the fight in his neighborhood of Silwan against house demolitions, his as well as others.

Fakhri shared a clear, simple message with us: When you return back to the United States tell your government leaders to stop funding the military and arms to Israel. Convince them we are regular people and we want to live.

In the far-left corner of the newly replaced wall on the Fakhri's family property, there is a fig tree. The cement blocks of the wall had been arranged so as to accommodate the curvy trunk of the tree, and above the wall the trunk continued and I could see the clearly distinct fig leaves and two tiny figs. Pray with me that we may be as accommodating as that wall, bearing witness and standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people resisting house demolitions, violence, displacement, and the injustice of occupation and genocide so that they can enjoy good fruit for years to come. Ω